

AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS

1. (previously presented) An air bearing slider comprising:
 - a slider body including a leading edge, a trailing edge and opposed sides and including an elongate length between the leading and trailing edges having a leading edge portion, a trailing edge portion and an intermediate portion proximate to a center axis of the slider body and a cross width between the opposed sides and the slider body including a center portion and opposed side portions;
 - a raised bearing surface or surfaces including a center portion along the leading edge portion of the slider body having a gap in a cross width direction within the center portion of the slider body and a bearing surface or surfaces within the intermediate portion having an expanded cross width relative to the cross width of the center portion; and
 - a stepped bearing surface or surfaces recessed from the raised bearing surface or surfaces and the stepped bearing surface or surfaces having a cross width profile that includes a narrowing cross width dimension that narrows in a direction towards the trailing edge of the slider body from the intermediate portion.
2. (cancelled)
3. (previously presented) The slider of claim 28 wherein the divergent bearing surface or surfaces include opposed side rails angled outwardly in a direction of the trailing edge .
4. (previously presented) The slider of claim 12 wherein the raised bearing surface or surfaces includes a cross rail along an intermediate portion of the slider body.
5. (previously presented) The slider of claim 4 wherein the cross rail includes opposed side portions and the opposed side portions of the cross rail include leading edge trenches to pressurize the raised bearing surface or surfaces of the raised cross rail.

6. (previously presented) The slider of claim 12 wherein an intermediate portion of the slider body includes a stepped cross rail forming a stepped bearing surface or surfaces along the intermediate portion of the slider body.
7. (previously presented) The slider of claim 28 wherein the divergent bearing surface or surfaces include bearing rails on opposed sides of a cross axis of the slider body along the intermediate portion of the slider body and the bearing rails angle outwardly in a direction toward the trailing edge of the slider body .
8. (previously presented) The slider of claim 7 wherein the bearing rails extend from the center portion and the slider includes a stepped bearing surface elevated from the cavity surface having a narrow cross width along the leading edge portion and an expanded cross width along the intermediate portion of the slider body, wherein the bearing rails and the center portion are formed on the stepped bearing surface.
9. (previously presented) The slider of claim 1 wherein the slider body includes a cavity surface or surfaces recessed below the raised bearing surface or surfaces and the leading edge portion includes opposed corner portions proximate to the opposed side portions and the trailing edge portion includes opposed corner portions proximate to the opposed side portions and each of the opposed corner portions forms the cavity surface or surfaces.
10. (previously presented) The slider of claim 4 wherein the intermediate portion includes a stepped cross rail having a shortened length dimension along the intermediate portion of the slider body and an expanded stepped cross dimension.
11. (cancelled)
12. (currently amended) An air bearing slider comprising:
a slider body having a leading edge, a trailing edge, opposed sides and a cross width between the opposed sides;

a raised bearing surface or surfaces elevated above a recessed surface or surfaces and the raised bearing surface or surfaces including a center portion having a narrow cross width spaced from the opposed sides of the slider body along a leading edge portion of the slider body and a center portion spaced from the opposed sides proximate to the trailing edge of the slider body; and

a trench proximate to the center portion of the raised bearing surface or surfaces along the leading edge portion of the slider body and a leading edge step and opposed side steps from the trench to the center portion along the leading edge portion of the slider body.

Claims 13-14 (cancelled)

15. (previously presented) The slider of claim 12 wherein the raised bearing surface or surfaces include divergent bearing rails or surfaces which extend outwardly from the center portion along the leading edge portion of the slider body.

16. (previously presented) The slider of claim 15 wherein the divergent bearing rails or surfaces are formed on a stepped bearing surface along an intermediate portion of the slider body.

Claims 17-19 (cancelled)

20. (previously presented) An air bearing slider comprising:
a slider body including a leading edge, a trailing edge and opposed sides; and
bearing surface means on the slider body for limiting off-nodal pressurization.

21. (previously presented) An air bearing slider comprising:
a slider body having a leading edge, a trailing edge and opposed sides;
a raised bearing surface or surfaces including a center portion along a leading edge portion of the slider body having a narrow leading edge cross width and including side portions extending outwardly from the center portion within an intermediate

portion of the slider body and a center pad proximate to the trailing edge spaced from opposed sides of the slider body;

a stepped bearing surface proximate to the center pad and recessed from the center pad and elevated from a cavity surface

22. (previously presented) The slider of claim 3 wherein the angled side rails extend outwardly from the center portion.

23. (previously presented) The slider of claim 3 and comprising a leading edge stepped surface elevated from the cavity surface and recessed from the raised bearing surface or surfaces of the angled side rails.

24. (previously presented) The slider of claim 3 wherein the slider body includes a stepped bearing surface having a tapered outer profile elevated from the cavity surface and the angled side rails are formed on the tapered stepped bearing surface.

25. (previously presented) The slider of claim 28 including a stepped bearing surface or surfaces recessed from the raised surface or surfaces and elevated from the cavity surface proximate to the divergent bearing surface or surfaces to pressurize the divergent bearing surface or surfaces.

Claims 26-27 (cancelled).

28. (previously presented) The slider of claim 21 wherein the raised bearing surface or surfaces include divergent bearing surface or surfaces extending along the intermediate portion of the slider body.

Claim 29 (cancelled).

30. (previously presented) The slider of claim 1 wherein each of the raised bearing surface or

surfaces on the leading edge portion of the slider body collectively form a narrow cross width profile within the center portion of the slider body.